

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

No. 473.—VOL. X.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 1893.

PRICE 1½d.

ENGLISH CHARACTER-WRITERS.

THE principle of evolution or development is as plainly discernible in literature as in other departments of human activity. New literary forms arise—the tree, as it were, puts forth fresh branches—but the principle of growth permeates the whole. Examples are not far to seek. The periodical essays of Addison and Steele, and of the host of followers and imitators who trod in their footsteps, added a new province to the world of letters; but the eighteenth-century essay, as it may distinctively be called, was a development of two previously existing forms of prose composition. Its beginning was a little uncertain and confused. The element of news, to which at first Steele gave prominence in the *Tatler*, was soon felt to be out of harmony with its surroundings, and was accordingly dropped. The two leading features of the essay proper, as found in the *Tatler*, omitting the earlier numbers, and in greater perfection in the *Spectator*, may be roughly described as moral reflection, and the portrayal of character and manners. The former is descended from the moral or Baconian essay of the seventeenth century; and the latter is the developed form of the Character-writing which was of old so popular a species of composition. The eighteenth-century essay by means of fiction and anecdote made this kind of portraiture piquant and personal. The ‘Characters,’ on the contrary, were general in their reference, and were written in a series of short, pointed sentences. The characteristics of classes were described under such generic titles as ‘a drunkard,’ ‘a scold,’ ‘a good wife,’ ‘a publisher,’ and so forth.

One of the earliest writers of Characters was Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, the ‘English Seneca,’ who essayed successfully a variety of forms of prose and verse composition. His *Characters of Virtues and Vices* contain eleven of the former and fifteen of the latter. They are vigorously written, and show considerable

power in the description of human nature in its strength and weakness. The character of ‘The Hypocrite’ is thus unsparingly summed up: ‘In brief, he is the stranger’s saint, the neighbour’s disease, the blot of goodness, a rotten stick in a dark night, the poppy in a cornfield, an ill-tempered candle with a great snuff that in going out smells ill; an angel abroad, a devil at home; and worse when an angel than when a devil.’

Bishop Hall’s book was followed in 1614 by the *Characters, or Witty Descriptions of the Properties of Sundry Persons*, of Sir Thomas Overbury, the unfortunate victim of Somerset and Lady Essex. This book, a small quarto of less than a hundred pages, became at once highly popular, and rapidly went through a number of editions. It increased in bulk as it increased in favour, for to the original contents many additions were made by various anonymous writers. The book that in 1614 had only twenty-one characters, contained eight years later no fewer than eighty. Overbury was a graphic but somewhat vulgar writer. ‘The Tinker,’ ‘A Courtier,’ ‘The Fair and Happy Milkmaid,’ are some of his titles. In the first named occurs an early use of a phrase which gave rise a few years ago to a great deal of unnecessary discussion: ‘So marches he [the Tinker] all over England with his *bag and baggage*; his conversation is irrefragable, for he is ever mending.’ ‘The Milkmaid,’ although tainted by the conceited style—in the old sense of the phrase—that was then so much in vogue, is pleasantly written, with an occasional touch of poetical feeling. ‘She rises,’ we are told, ‘with Chanticleer, her dame’s cock, and at night makes the lamb her curfew;’ ‘When winter evenings fall early, sitting at her merry wheel, she sings defiance to the giddy wheel of fortune;’ and lastly: ‘Thus lives she, and all her care is, she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheet.’ The Courtier is described in a series of epigrammatic sentences: ‘He knows no man that is not generally known;’ ‘He follows nothing but incon-

stancy, admires nothing but beauty, honours nothing but fortune.'

Several books of Characters followed Overbury's work in rapid succession, including one by Nicholas Breton, the poet. But the next work of this kind of any importance was the *Microcosmography*, written by John Earle, Bishop of Salisbury, and published in 1628. In five years it went through six editions, and has been reprinted more than once during the present century. The contents are very varied, and the author is never dull. The manners of the time are vividly painted in a strain of good-humoured raillery, not unmingled with satire, with many touches that show the writer to have been a very acute observer of the customs and doings of his contemporaries.

Among the Characters are 'A Young Raw Preacher,' 'A Self-conceited Man,' 'A Tavern,' 'An Old College Butler,' 'A Player,' 'A She Precise Hypocrite,' 'Paul's Walk,' 'An University Dun,' and many more. 'Paul's Walk' is a lively description of the busy scene then daily beheld within the walls of the old St Paul's Cathedral. The middle aisle was a recognised promenade and meeting-place. There, merchants transacted their business, courtiers and gallants exhibited their newest and bravest attire, gossip and scandal were circulated, servants were hired, and pick-pockets plied a profitable trade. 'The noise in it,' says Earle, 'is like that of bees, a strange humming or buzz mixed of walking tongues and feet: it is a kind of still roar or loud whisper. It is the great exchange of all discourse, and no business whatsoever but is here stirring and a-foot.' Even while divine service was being performed the promenaders continued their proceedings. The usual time for walking in St Paul's was an hour or so in the morning, and from three to six in the afternoon. As noon approached, the crowd of busy idlers melted away in search of dinner at their own homes or at the neighbouring ordinaries, until only the dinnerless were left, who paced out the interval in the aisles, and were said to have 'dined with Duke Humphrey,' in reference to the tomb of the 'good Duke Humphrey' of Gloucester, which was supposed to be in the cathedral.

The 'University Dun' will be recognised perhaps by some readers as a not unfamiliar figure. 'He is a gentleman's follower cheaply purchased, for his own money has hired him;' 'He is a great complainer of scholars' loitering, for he is sure never to find them within, and yet he is the chief cause many times that makes them study.' And in a similar vein the Bishop goes on to describe how some men choose their rooms on purpose to avoid the dun, and think that chamber the best that gives them the clearest view of his approach, that by shifting him off men learn to shift in the world, and that the only place to mollify him is the buttery, where he will run up his debtor a long score for liquor, for 'he is one much wrought with good beer and rhetoric.' The 'She Precise Hypocrite' is a bitter attack on the female Puritans, and, though rather coarse, is very amusing. The 'Tavern' and its frequenters are described with mild satire: 'If the vintner's nose

be at door, it is a sign sufficient; but the absence of this is supplied by the ivy bush.' The first Character in the book is that of 'a child.' 'His soul,' says Earle, 'is yet a white paper unscrawled with observations of the world, wherewith, at length, it becomes a blurred note-book.' This simile occurs in more than one of our old authors, and Shakespeare, in *King John*, speaking of a child, says:

The hand of time
Shall draw this brief into as huge a volume.

The *Microcosmography* was followed by many books of Characters by writers now altogether unknown or of little importance. Most of their contents show the same characteristics. The Characters are hit off in short sentences which try hard to be epigrammatic; some are not without humour, and many are often interesting for the light they throw on the manners and popular habits of the time. Of the books that were published within a few years of Bishop Earle's work, the best perhaps were the *Picture Loquentes*, by Wye Saltonstall, 1631; and *A Strange Metamorphosis of Man, transformed into a Wilderness: Deciphered in Characters*, 1634, by a writer whose name is unknown. As the times became more troublous and party feeling ran high, many of the Characters published began to have reference to the political and ecclesiastical strifes that were agitating the country. In a little book of *Characters and Elegies* by Sir Francis Wortley, 1646, may be found the characters of 'His Royal Majestie,' 'An Antinomian, or Anabaptistcall Independent,' 'A Jesuit,' and others of a similar kind. In *The Times Anatomised*, 1647, by T. Ford, are 'A Good King,' 'Rebellion,' 'Warre,' and others having obvious reference to current events.

Between 1647 and the end of the seventeenth century some thirty books of Characters were published; but few were of any importance, and enumeration would be tedious. The author of one of these books, Richard Flecknoe, has been made unenviably famous by Dryden's bitter satire. In the second volume of Samuel Butler's *Remains*, as published by Thyer in 1759, there are over a hundred Characters; and besides these, sixty-six additional characters are lost to the world among the yet unpublished *Remains* of the author of *Hudibras*. Among the latter is a character of a 'Stationer,' as publishers and book-sellers were then called. It is written in the spirit of the famous saying, 'Now Barabbas was a publisher.' 'A Stationer,' says Butler, 'is one that lives by books, and understands nothing of them but the prices. . . . He abuses those most (like other cheats) that he gains most by, and like a disease destroys those that feed him;' and in this strain of vilification the whole article is written.

The writing of Characters practically died out with the close of the seventeenth century. The exhibition and discussion of the idiosyncrasies of individuals and of classes became a leading feature of the periodical essays, and as these went out of popular favour, there arose the English novel, in the modern sense of the term, and character became an important item in the stock-in-trade of the novelist. The student of modern manners, as exhibited in fiction, cannot complain

of lack of material; he may range from Fielding to Thackeray, and from Jane Austen to George Eliot, and this surely will give him 'ample room and verge enough.'

THE BURDEN OF ISABEL*

CHAPTER III.—THE BLACK TULIP AND THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

MEANWHILE, Isabel Raynor and her cousin Euphemia Suffield wandered in the sunny garden. If they were not 'in maiden meditation, fancy free,' as they walked along the gravelled paths with their arms about each other, they at least appeared to be. The flowers were late that year, and Whitsuntide was early. There was not a hint of rosebuds; but the garden was gay with the last of the blooms of spring, especially with beds of tulips, for which Suffield had the love of a Dutchman. Fragrant and beautiful, however, as were the flowers in the freshness of the morning, they seemed but sweet and illustrative notes and comments on the beauty of the two maidens that walked among them. A fanciful young poet who afterwards saw the young ladies together in other scenes called them the Black Tulip and the Lily of the Valley. Had he seen them together on that particular morning his floriate fancy would have appeared less forced; for, with the prodigal suggestions of the garden about them, Isabel, in her dark dress and with her rich dark beauty, indeed seemed the human embodiment, express and admirable, of the Black Tulip of Dumas' unfortunate and long-suffering hero—tall and straight, with a full and gorgeous cup; while the fair Euphemia, small and sylph-like, and arrayed in white, looked by contrast with her as the complete realisation of the shy and tender Lily of the Valley blooming in its sheath of green.

The Black Tulip and the Lily of the Valley were in close personal contact; but their meditations, to judge from their aspect, were wide apart. Isabel, moderating her naturally stately gait to Euphemia's convenience, paced along with a serious, not to say sad, countenance; for she felt that her uncle Harry, to whose coming she had looked forward with so lively an interest, if he did not absolutely dislike her, held his liking in abeyance, as if she were primarily under suspicion—and that she both resented and failed to understand. Her cousin, on the contrary, stepped as to a measure, and let her bright eyes rove carelessly round, now and again whistling excellent imitations of the episodic and sleepy notes of the garden birds, drowsy after their early debauch of song.

'Oh, I do love to be up early in the summer-time!' exclaimed Euphemia, in her happy carelessness failing to remark her cousin's serious abstraction. 'Don't you, Isabel?—don't you?'

'I do, my dear,' answered Isabel smiling on her. 'I like to be up early all the year round. It's so pleasant, as Sir Walter Scott used to say,

to break the neck of the day's work before breakfast.'

'How do you know Sir Walter Scott used to say that?' asked Euphemia with a touch of child-like pique and wonder on her face.

'How do I know! I've read it, of course, my dear,' said Isabel with a look of wonder in her turn.

'What a lot of things you seem to read, Isabel! You always make me feel like a goose; when you're not here, I rather fancy myself as a clever sort of person.'

'My dear Phemy!' exclaimed Isabel, 'it's not right of me to make you feel like a goose, because you are not a goose at all, but a very bright, dear, clever little song-bird!'

'Oh, it's nice of you to say that, Bell!' said Phemy, hugging her cousin's arm. 'I like it, you know, though I don't believe it's true.'

'It is true, indeed, my dear,' said Isabel; 'and I shall blame myself very much if anything I may say should somehow make you think poorly of yourself. Forgive me, dear. It is only my schoolmistress way, which I am afraid I can't very easily get out of, to quote books I've read and to name authors I happen to be interested in. I'll try not to do it, my dear.'

'I wish you were not a schoolmistress, Bell.'

'What would you have me be? A mill-girl, or a milliner, or a telegraphist?'

'Bell! you know well enough it is not necessary that you should be anything but a lady.'

'Merely to be a lady, dear,' said Isabel, 'is not an occupation by which you can make a hundred and fifty pounds a year; and to be a schoolmistress is.'

'You know what I mean, Bell,' said Euphemia. 'Father always says he has more for us all than he knows what to do with. Why don't you stay with us altogether? I daresay father would give you a hundred and fifty a year for yourself.'

'My dear Phemy, I know Uncle George is the best and kindest and most generous man in the world. He is too good, but— Well, the fact is I can't endure to be idle, and I like to earn my hundred and fifty for myself in my own way.'

'I can't understand,' said Phemy, 'why you want to be so independent. It's not like a girl at all,' she added, while she blankly felt and vaguely resented that Isabel was stronger, cleverer, more resolute than a woman had any right to be. It was absurd—and in a sense improper—in a woman to strive to provide herself with those things which fathers (and husbands) were expressly created to find for her. 'I suppose, then, Bell, you wouldn't marry a man with money unless you had money too?'

'I should prefer to have some money of my own,' answered Isabel, as if she were delivering an opinion which she had seriously pondered. 'But I think that "in that connection," as the Americans say, it would not matter much if I had money or my husband had money, or we both had nothing but hands and heads to provide a living. Marriage, you see, is like no other relationship; it is—or it should be, I think—not the joining of two persons together, but the bringing together of the two parts of one complete person.'

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'Like a hook and an eye, I suppose?' said Euphemia.

'If you like to put it like that, my dear,' answered Isabel; and then she continued the serious exposition of her view of marriage. 'So, you see, what the one has belongs to both, and what the one wants the other makes up. There can be no question of mine or thine, of different interests, if they are properly matched—that is, I suppose,' she added half-musingly, 'if they truly and unreservedly love each other.'

'What a queer girl you are, Isabel!' exclaimed Euphemia.

'Am I? Perhaps I am,' said Isabel with resignation.

'How you can think of all these awfully wise things, I can't make out!'

'I can't help thinking of "things," as you call them, when I'm alone.'

'Well,' said Euphemia, returning in triumph to the point of conviction she had at first wished to make, 'that's what I tell you: you've no business to be alone. Father always says it's an absurd shame that a clever, handsome girl like you should not get married.—Tell me now, Bell dear, just between our two selves, why you won't accept George?'

'Really, Phemy dear, that is a plain question!'

'Don't you think him nice? Don't you like him?' urged Phemy.

'I like him very much; but'—

'Do you like any one else better?' pursued Phemy.

'That's not the question, my dear,' said Isabel, evading the point with a light laugh. 'To think,' she exclaimed with another laugh, 'that all my serious lecture about marriage has been thrown away! Don't you understand, my dear, that in my view a girl must not only like a man, but understand and admire him, and sympathise with his ambitions very much, to be ready to spend all her life with him? I couldn't marry George—though it's impertinent to say that, since he has never asked me—but I couldn't marry him, because I don't think I could spend all my life with him.'

'But,' said Phemy, 'don't you think you could have an affection for a man you didn't admire in those other ways?'

'Oh, affection!' said Isabel; 'that's another thing. But I think I give all my affection to my family—to uncle and aunt, and you and George. You may have an affection for a person you wouldn't care to marry.'

'George hasn't asked you yet, Bell,' said Euphemia, with a clear intention in her tone, 'but depend upon it he will ask you.'

'You don't mean you will tell him?' exclaimed Isabel in a hot flush of maidenly alarm. 'If you tell him, Phemy, what I have said to you in confidence, I will never forgive you!'

'I won't say anything to him about it, my dear,' said Phemy. 'Don't be so afraid. But do tell me one thing more: what kind of man do you think you could love very, very much?'

Isabel, however, evidently thought she had said enough in confidence; for she answered lightly: 'I don't think I could ever love a man that was not at least twenty years older than myself: I couldn't respect a younger man.'

'Now, you're not serious,' said Euphemia with a pout; 'and I won't tell you the kind of man I could love very, very much.'

'Oh, do tell me that, please, Phemy dear,' said Isabel, relieved and gratified that confidence was now to be diverted to the other side.

'Well,' said Euphemia, hugging still closer her cousin's arm, 'the man I would love very much must be like my dear father. He may be as old as he likes'—

'What? said Isabel. 'Seventy or eighty?'

'No; not quite so old as that. I think thirty will do. He needn't be very good-looking—I don't think I care for good-looking men: they're so much taken up with themselves and their hair and their moustaches—but he must be very good and very kind and very generous.—But there's the breakfast bell: we mustn't keep mother waiting. I'll tell you some other time.'

CHAPTER IV.—THE TAME PHILOSOPHER.

When they entered the breakfast-room, the household was already assembled for morning prayers, and the master of the house sat in his place at the table with the prayer-book before him, and the unopened letter-bag and the uncut morning paper ready to his hand. Isabel and her cousin dropped silently into vacant seats by the door, and the function went on, Isabel, it must be confessed, feeling and showing considerable preoccupation: she was familiar with that kind of thing twice a day at school. The prayers were decorously and feelingly read, while Tummus, who was a privileged client of the house, and who had been brought up in the Methodist communion, interjected at every pause of the master a fervent 'Amen!' and then the men-servants and maid-servants trooped out with a cheerful countenance to the day's duties and relaxations. Then also Mr Suffield turned with alacrity to the letter-bag, to which he and his wife alone possessed a key. He opened it while the family took their places at table, and Tummus brought in the hot dishes.

'Here's two for you, mother, said Suffield, dealing out the letters; 'three for you, George—and one o' them in a lady's hand: that won't do, lad; three, four, five, six—bless me!—seven, eight for "H. Raynor, Esq., C.M.G.!" That must be you, Harry; and most o' them directed and redirected.—Ah, Isabel, my lass, and here's one solitary epistle for you. H'm! seems to me I ought to know the fist. Redirected twice over. Well, there you are.'

Isabel took her letter and opened it with misgiving. The first words she read blanched her face to a deathly shade, and almost made her faint with grief, pain, and apprehension. But no one noticed her emotion—except George, who always kept an interested eye on her—because of the entrance of a guest, and Isabel devoured part of her letter unquestioned.

Mr Suffield kept open house, and a lavish table without ostentation; for it is altogether a mistake to suppose that only those who have inherited landed estates and personalty running to five or six figures have the art of frank and free hospitality. That is really not an art at all, but an instinct, humane and hearty; and the cost-

monger may in his degree possess it as much as, if not more than, the duke. Mr Suffield's nature was lordly, if not ducal; and the amount he disbursed in casual largess, as well as in regular beneficence and undemonstrative hospitality, would have impoverished many a man of considerable means. Many and various were the 'friends' who dropped in at meal-times when the master was known to be at home, but of all, none was more constant in his friendly habit than the present visitor, Mr Ebenezer M'Fie. He seldom came when Mr Suffield was away—for he seemed to know that he was not greatly admired or beloved by the mistress of the house—but when Suffield was at home he came regularly to breakfast.

He was a dry and somewhat toothless little Scotsman, who had failed as schoolmaster and as editor, and who now lived—it was suspected, but scarcely known—on certain meagre earnings as a teacher and preacher and on occasional 'loans'—or, more properly, gifts—from his generous friend Suffield. He was not a very estimable person; but Suffield delighted in him—in his learning and his eloquence. Mrs Suffield unkindly called him 'George's tame philosopher,' and not infrequently hinted that the sole reason of her husband's belief in the tame philosopher's wisdom was that he was the only one besides himself whom he had ever heard talk: her inveterate opinion being that her husband monopolised usually the conversation of the house. The philosopher's style of speech seemed to be modelled on the writings of the late Thomas Carlyle; it was English—of a heavy and involved kind—but it was uttered with so abominable an accent that it was unintelligible to most people. Mr Suffield had given attention to it, and therefore seemed to understand it; but his son, who had not patience to quarry a meaning out of the rugged and barbarous eloquence of the philosopher, did not scruple at times to call him 'an odd ass.'

'George Suffield,' exclaimed the philosopher now, fervently shaking hands with his host, 'I'm glad to see ye again, hale and hearty, out o' that welter o' humanity, that roaring loom o' Time they call London.'

'I'm not here for long, though, Eben,' said Suffield, returning his pressure.

'Yet a little while—I know, man. But ye may abide among your own people longer than ye at the present thoughtless fleeting moment intend. Ye may: I hope ye may. The domain of the Possible, man, is immeasurably spacious: there are no limits to the realm of Hope.'

'Just so, Eben,' said Suffield, 'but'—

'Fiddle-de-dee, my dear,' said his wife. 'The sausages are getting cold: will you help them?—I'm much as usual, thank you, Mr M'Fie,' said she in answer to the philosopher's polite inquiry concerning her well-being.—'Will you sit here? This is my brother, Mr Harry Raynor; the others you know.—Isabel, dear, that's a steak-and-kidney pie before you. You don't look well, my dear; you and Phemy have been out too early.'

'I'm very well, thank you, aunt,' answered Isabel, recovering herself with an effort: her letter she had already put in her pocket: she feared to finish reading it then.

George watched her with perturbed spirit and jealous eye: from whom, he asked himself, could have come the letter which had caused her such lively emotion, and which she had crammed away unread?—from whom but from a lover? And yet her emotion did not seem to be of a pleasant kind. Could it be that the lover was ill? In order to hide his perturbation and to refrain from conversation, George opened out *The Lancashire Gazette*. He found and began to read the notice of the play which he had seen the night before, and which had been discussed on his father's return. He was quickly interested. He usually affected to despise all except metropolitan journalism, but here was vigorous and fearless writing which he was compelled to respect and admire. He could not contain his interest.

'By jingo!' he exclaimed, 'here's Alan Ainsworth going it like one o'clock!'

"Going it like one o'clock," said the philosopher, pausing with a bit of toast near his mouth, 'is a strange phrase of the vulgar tongue, and to the undiscerning eye appears absurd and meaningless. It would be curious to inquire concerning its origin—whence and how—by what association, concatenation, or linking of ideas—it comes to be used to express the extremity of speed, vigour, or abandonment.'

That was properly regarded as but a reflective parenthesis that did not demand discussion. Suffield took polite note of it, however.

'Yes; just so, Eben,' said he; and then turned to his son with lively concern, and asked: 'Pitching into the play, is he? It's sure to be well done. Read it out, lad.'

Isabel, for her part, welcomed this request of her uncle: it would keep curious eyes and questions from herself—she was conscious of appearing pale and disturbed—it would spare her the necessity of making and sharing in conversation; and the interest of the matter might turn her mind a little from the trouble that had seized it. George read, nothing loth, while his father interjected 'H'm's' and 'Ha's' of acceptance or approval, and the philosopher listened with his hand to his ear and with the air of a man who had been in his time a schoolmaster and an editor, and withal a critic. The article was what is commonly called 'a slating' of both play and players; and the 'slating' was very vigorously done, spite of the fact that concerning both players and play London was supposed to be very enthusiastic. 'A noble tragedy,' declared the critic, 'which was altogether unsuited to stage representation, has been laid sacrilegious hands on by the playwright and the play-actor, and the result is an indifferent melodrama, badly acted;' with much more, general and particular, to the same effect. Finally he said: 'Of course the play has been hailed in London as a triumph of stage management and acting; but it is in reality a triumph of pedantry, dullness, and incapacity.'

'What do you think of that?' cried Suffield in triumph, when the reading was finished. 'That's just what you were trying to say last night, I suppose, Isabel?'

'Just what I was trying to say, uncle,' said Isabel with a smile.

'Yes,' said the philosopher, looking round, perking himself, and clearly demanding the atten-

tion of the table; 'the young man writes with great promise—great promise, indeed.'

'Mr Ainsworth,' said young George, 'if I understand him at all, would hope there is performance there as well as promise.'

'No doubt, sir; no doubt, my young friend,' said the philosopher. Then, eluding the point presented, he continued: 'He is right. We are the slaves of rumour. We accept alike the reputation of book or man.'—

'Or play,' suggested George.

'Or play,' accepted the philosopher.

'Or play-actor,' suggested George, pleased with his success.

'Or play-actor, sir,' again accepted the philosopher. 'We accept their reputation, if it be made in London, let us say.'—

'Or made in Germany,' again suggested George.

'—because,' continued the philosopher, without taking account this time of the interruption, 'we are ourselves incompetent to distinguish between the estimate of ignorant exaggeration and that of the authentic insight of the few who know what they say, and say only what they know.'

'You're eating no breakfast, Mr M'Fie,' said Mrs Suffield. 'George, my dear, see that Mr M'Fie has something; whereupon Suffield recommended the dish before him.'

'Ah,' said the philosopher, 'I believe that in the great metropolis they call these little things saveloys.'

'Sausages, sir; these are sausages,' said young George. 'Saveloys are, I understand, a very inferior and vulgar kind of sausage.'

'Mixed originally, I think the dictionaries say,' Isabel was tempted to remark, 'with brains—as Sir Joshua Reynolds said his colours were.'—Then remembering her promise in the garden to Euphemia, she said aside to her: 'I beg your pardon, dear.'

'Now,' said the philosopher, shaking himself up as if he were a bottle of medicine, 'I call that very good; really witty, and of the true Attic flavour. I do.'

'Oh yes, Isabel's a smart girl,' observed Suffield genially; then with his kindly eye more particularly on his brother-in-law, he insisted: 'I say, Isabel's a clever girl.'

'No doubt,' said Uncle Harry, while he shrewdly considered his niece.

'Please, uncle,' said Isabel, blushing with confusion, and appealing to Suffield in a low voice, 'don't!—don't make me ashamed of myself!'

'No need, my lass,' said Suffield aloud, 'to be ashamed of yourself!'

But Isabel thought there was, especially with Uncle Harry's shrewd eye, which she felt to be cold and critical, fixed on her. She lapsed into a painful silence, on the sudden suspicion that she must appear a very forward and conceited young woman. But why did Uncle Harry—her father's own brother—regard her so? Why did he look at her, not only without affection or tenderness, but—it seemed to her—with absolute aversion? Did she strike him as being so disagreeable a creature either in character or in appearance, or in both?

'But,' said the philosopher, seizing the opportunity of the pause, 'to return to the interesting subject we were discussing. I said a few moments

ago that we are the slaves of Rumour. About this play now: we either accept the opinion of the great Babylon borne on the wings of the newspapers, or we accept this young man's opinion.'

'I don't,' said young George promptly.

'My dear young sir,' said the philosopher, 'I question that. You think that you don't. To all but a few'—and there was a clear hint in his eye and his manner that he considered himself one of the few—'current report is irrefutable evidence. To see with our own eyes—to hear with our own ears.'—

'Goodness me!' exclaimed Mrs Suffield impatiently; 'whose ears should I hear with if not with my own?'

'Ah, my dear lady,' crackled on the philosopher, now enjoying himself immensely, 'this commonly thought easiest of all things is of things hard to be done one of the hardest—nay, the hardest of all.' And so on, and so on he continued, becoming more and more intoxicated with the sound of his own voice and swollen with the volume of his own verbosity.

And his audience seemed to listen with attention and interest. The excellent Suffield, however, was the only person who toiled after him through his obscure and sounding platitudes in the single-minded hope of carrying away some wisdom. All the others were more or less occupied with things of livelier and more intimate concern. Mrs Suffield was thinking over her arrangements for the day—and at the same time giving a ray of attention to her niece, who looked very much less than her usual self that morning; George was still considering, half in pity, half in jealousy, his cousin's preoccupation and depression; Euphemia was chilled and saddened because evidently Isabel cherished a feeling for some one of which she had refused to let her know; Uncle Harry was wondering whether Isabel added to her faults of self-consciousness and conceit that of sulkiness; and Isabel herself was thinking of that letter which was burning her pocket, and resenting—as unkindly and undeserved—the cold and critical regard under which Uncle Harry was keeping her. The notable thing was that to all save to the philosopher and his simple-minded patron and pupil, and to Isabel herself, the real centre of interest was Isabel.

'Well, now, my dear,' said Mrs Suffield at length to her husband, thrusting into a pause in the philosopher's discourse, 'we have a great many things to do to-day, and we haven't yet begun to do any of them. The girls and I must see to things,' continued she, rising.—'George, my dear, will you ring the bell?—If you, my dear,' said she again to her husband, 'want to discuss the affairs of the universe with Mr M'Fie, you'd better take him into the garden.'

'My dear lady,' said the philosopher, 'I and your husband have had our say, I think.' (As matter of fact, Suffield had said nothing but 'H'm!' or 'Ye-es' now and then.)

The philosopher rose then and straggled out through the open French window into the garden. Suffield was politely following him, when Uncle Harry laid his hand on his arm.

'Who,' he asked, 'is your Mentor, George?'

'I don't know about Mentor,' answered Suffield, 'but he is a curious, clever creature.'

'Strong in the wind, but weak in the legs, I should think, George,' said Uncle Harry.

'I shall be back to you in a minute or two, aunt,' said Isabel; and she fled to her room and locked herself in to read her letter.

ROASTING VERSUS BAKING.

It is a little difficult to give an exactly correct definition of the word Baking so far as it concerns the treatment of meats; for although its generally accepted meaning is cooking in ovens, it can be shown that joints may be roasted in an oven as perfectly as (or possibly more perfectly than) they can be done in the front of a fire. The real difference between an oven suited or unsuited for roasting meat is chiefly in the provision or absence of effective ventilation. There are other features to be considered, as will be explained directly, but the primary variation is this. If we take an example in the oven of an old-fashioned open range, we shall have about the most primitive thing of its kind; and the results, if we attempt to roast in it, justify the long-standing prejudice against oven-cooked meat, a prejudice which appears to have made up its mind to die hard. The old open-range oven is the root of the prejudice, although many of the cheap descriptions of more modern ranges should have some share of the blame. What is generally termed (and condemned) as baked meat is that which is served up apparently saturated with moisture, and having a peculiarly noticeable flavour, different from what is experienced with joints roasted in front of the fire, and decidedly to its disadvantage. This is meat cooked in an oven which is innocent of ventilation, not scrupulously clean, and with a roasting-pan which favours the spitting and subsequent calcination of what fatty juices drip from the article being cooked. It is, however, quite possible to get these results with a really good and perfected range oven, if carelessly used; so it will be seen that another feature exists conducive or otherwise to good results, and this is the care exercised by the cook.

Assuming an oven is ventilated, and ventilated as it should be, with both an inlet and outlet ventilator—for one will not act alone, neither will one act without the other—then both must be open if ventilation is sought for. Supposing these to exist, then we may rely upon all steam and vapours driven from the joint by the action of the heat being promptly carried away, just as effectively as if the meat were suspended in front of a fire. This is desirable and good. Next, we may assume the oven is really clean—sweet, in fact; so that if it is heated when empty, it will yield no odour upon opening the door. In assuming this state of things, it is to be feared we assume too much in really the majority of cases. Often and often, when there is a complaint that odours of cooking are

obvious in other parts of the house than the kitchen, the objectionable smell is due to a hot oven, but which has nothing in it—that is, nothing being cooked. Bold as the assertion may be, it is true, that the majority of ovens in busy kitchens are foul—no milder word will describe the state. The most delightful practice in relation to ovens which it has been my pleasure to observe, is, I believe, peculiar to Devonshire. They whitewash the interiors of their range ovens. This practice is excellent in many ways, and it is ingenious. Firstly, it makes the ovens light, very much so; and it is doubtful if ovens would be allowed to get so dirty if they were not so dark and the dirt so inconspicuous. Then the lime-whiting, which is the particular ingredient of whitewash, is a material approaching the nature of a disinfectant; anyway, it is not favourable to smells or odours of any kind whatever. Lastly, it so plainly shows by discoloration when objectionable results may be expected and the limewash should be renewed. Any odd-man or gardener or boy can apply it, say once a fortnight. Whitewashing the inside of an oven is as good as lining it with tiles, and has none of the many objections this latter arrangement would involve. Next best to whitening oven interiors is the practice of regularly scrubbing them out, as one would have a cupboard scrubbed. Surely the place, limited as it is as regards space, where we complete the preparation of our cooked foods should be wholesomely clean.

Assuming, then, that the oven is really clean, a further necessary feature is a suitable roasting-pan. Now, a very common and prevalent idea is that anything in the form of a tin pan will do to place under the joint, providing its size is correct or nearly so, and that, of course, it is not leaky or imperfect. This idea is a very wrong one, and accountable for a good deal of the difference between what we may still continue to call roasted and baked meat. A single pan, after the cooking process has been going on for a short time, becomes partially filled with liquid fat, and after a further short period, this substance begins to boil and continues to do so practically without cessation until the cooking is finished. The objectionable feature is that fat, when boiling, has little bursts of air or gas, causing particles to be projected against the highly heated plates of the oven, where it is instantly scorched up, evolving the strong and disagreeable odour of burning fat so commonly associated with oven-cooking. This action of the fat is termed 'spitting,' and when the oven is very hot and the fat at the boil, it is really a little shower that falls upon the oven sides. Occasionally, especially when the oven is allowed to become overheated, this occurs to such an extent, that upon opening the oven door, quite a cloud of hot disagreeable vapour escapes. The remedy for this is to have a double pan—that is, two pans, almost the duplicates of each other, except that one is made to fit in a suitable manner within the other. (They are obtainable at all ironmongers and stores in a variety of sizes.) The object of a double pan is that the lower one is arranged to receive water, and when it is filled, this water consequently envelops the lower part of the upper pan. In other words, the upper pan rests in water during the time

that cooking operations are in progress. The result of this is that the fat never boils; and if we prevent the boiling, then we prevent the spitting and subsequent odour; the discoloration and spoiling of the fat being also averted. Water reaches a maximum temperature of two hundred and twelve degrees when it boils, and this is too low a heat for fat to boil at; consequently, while there is water in the lower pan, the fat in the upper pan is motionless, and does not boil or act disagreeably. The use of a double pan, it will be seen, tends very materially to keep the oven clean and wholesome.

There are a considerable number of people who strongly assert that oven-cooked meat, under the best of circumstances, with the most skilled care and attention and other details, cannot be made to equal in flavour and other advantages a joint roasted in front of a fire. This, as before mentioned, is really owing, first, to the influence of a rooted prejudice; secondly, an oven or appliances (or care) unsuited to give the desired results. Roasting in front of the fire requires no special care as regards ventilation, choice of pans, &c., and is therefore at an advantage in this respect, that carelessness or ignorance is less likely to have an ill effect. When meat is roasted in an oven, the different features dwelt upon are essential; but if these features exist, then the roasting is done with less trouble and with decidedly less fuel than by the other means. The fact of oven-roasting being least trouble is testified by the majority of cooks giving preference to it, without any other tangible reason.

It is interesting to notice how long the prejudice to oven-cooked meat has existed, and how real and vigorous it has always been. Count Rumford, who may be considered the pioneer in regard to improvements in heating and cooking appliances, was the first to introduce an oven, and also, strangely enough, an oven pan, which gave the requisite results, equal to the best we can get to-day. He, as a very capable authority, gave out that meat roasted in an oven was superior in flavour and better generally than that roasted in front of a fire. This was in 1802, ninety years ago, when it may be supposed ovens and oven-roasting could not have been nearly so well understood, either by makers or users, as now. Mr W. Mattieu Williams, another high authority, and but recently deceased, also pronounced in favour of oven-roasting as the superior method. Count Rumford remarked, in one of his lectures, that he despaired of getting any Englishman to believe his words, showing that he was fully alive to the prejudice in all its strength. Mattieu Williams in his *Chemistry of Cookery* makes some very telling remarks in relation to this subject. He wonders how it is that beef (when being cooked) is attributed with emitting vapours that are injurious to beef, and mutton with vapours injurious to mutton. He says it is to the effect of burning fat that ill results are chiefly due.

It is not intended to advocate the use of ovens to the exclusion of front roasting, for the latter method of cooking joints has no ill features beyond the greater attention needed and the greater expenditure of fuel. A good and modern range should be capable of cooking both ways at one and the same time if desired; but if the

kitchen is a busy one and time has to be economised, then the cook may certainly be trusted to put a joint in an oven if the necessary features to ensure good results exist.

ISABEL DYSART.*

CHAPTER III.

THE fumes of that excitement still troubled Isabel's brain next day. She scarcely heard what her mother was talking of during all the rest of the evening, and the first thing that came into her mind when she woke was that incident in the dark road—the big gables against the sky, the blackness of the shadows, and the encounter—which she thought had marked her for life. It seemed to her, as she dressed, that there was still a red spot on her cheek where *that* had been, and that he had put a brand upon her to mark her for his property, as the farmers do with their sheep. She rubbed it once more till it did really blaze, as she fancied, and again called Mrs Dysart's attention. 'It must really have been a bee that stung you, Isabel. What a strange thing at this time of year,' her mother said.

And then there was the thought of what he had said at parting. He would come for his answer to-morrow. To-morrow! That was now this day. And why should there be such a hurry for an answer, and what did he mean by going to London? There had never been a word about it before—going to London!—when he was in the heart of everything in Edinburgh, and with the greatest doctor in Edinburgh, and so much thought of there. Never had such an idea been suggested till now. To London! The thought made Isabel's heart beat a little. None of her sisters had gone farther afield than Glasgow, and that was Jeanie, whose man Mrs Dysart put up with so painfully, and who was never done flourishing the shops in Buchanan Street and the conveniences of a big town before the eyes of her mother and sisters. What would they think of a London lady that could walk in the parks, and see all the grand shows, and the King himself in the streets? Isabel's bosom could not but thrill in spite of herself with that suggestion. But what was all the hurry for, and an answer to-morrow, and everything brought to a crisis in a moment? The more she thought it all over, the more her head went round. Willie Torrence had been her sweetheart all her life. That their intercourse might come to a sudden crisis at any moment, had always been a thing possible—but nothing so hasty, so immediate as this. To be summoned to accede to a sudden proposal, to take his hand and come with him, as if it was a thing which she was sure to do for the asking, and for which she was quite ready, was in itself an offence almost beyond pardon, even if there had not been the bold freedom, the outrage—for so the girl felt it—of the previous incident. What did Isabel care if he were Sir William twenty times over, and who was he that he should dare to think she would take him whenever he pleased to ask her? Her pride and her spirit were all in arms.

It added no little to Isabel's excitement that

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the young minister should choose this day of all others to make one of his visits. He came in early in the afternoon, coming through the garden, and was seen by Mrs Dysart from the window, who exclaimed at the sight of him, 'Bless me, Isabel—Mr Murray with a gun over his shoulder! What will be going to happen now? the volunteers called out, and even the minister under arms? But that would mean an invasion at the very least, and there's no Bonaparty to trouble the world now.'

Isabel was not interested by the prospect of an invasion, though her heart gave a jump to hear the minister with his light, active foot come up-stairs. 'I'll take care o' it, sir—I'll take care o' it—if it disna gang aff o' itsel,' Jenny was heard to call after him as the drawing-room door opened; and Mrs Dysart plunged into the subject before the young man had found a chair. 'Was that you, Mr Murray, carrying a gun?' she said. 'Lord bless me! I just cried out: "There'll be word of a new invasion." But perhaps it was just for a day's shooting, after all? There's no harm I know o', she added apologetically, 'why a minister should not shoot a bird for his dinner as well as other men.'

'Not that,' he said with a smile; 'neither the one nor the other—but nothing very cheerful. I am going to take my turn to-night in the churchyard to watch our graves, that there may be no desecration. I have been up to Mr Philip Morton's to borrow his gun.'

'But, dear me,' said Mrs Dysart, 'there are surely plenty of men without the minister.'

'And why should the minister be behind when there's unpleasant work to do?' he asked. 'They do not like it, as how should they; and neither do I like it: but I would watch night and day,' he said with a hasty rising of colour, 'before that last resting-place of my poor folk was disturbed—if it was to cost me my life.'

'And that it might well do,' cried Mrs Dysart; 'for you're not too strong a man: you should mind that.'

'I am strong enough for my duty, as I think every man is,' he replied; 'it's never that that harms.'

'But there's very different notions on that point. Here was Willie Torrence maintaining with me the other night that a doctor's duty was just the other way; and he was earnest about it too, as earnest as you are,' Mrs Dysart said.

Murray gave a quick unconscious glance round the room, which seemed to him in a moment to be full of traces of his rival: he saw them in Isabel's silent air bending over her work, as if entirely absorbed in it, taking no notice of anything, she who generally was so ready to take her part in the conversation. He gave her a long regretful look, of which she was partly conscious, though she never lifted her eyes.

'And I would not say he was wrong,' he answered with a sigh. 'He's an enthusiast for his profession, as every man should be. I would not say he was wrong. But,' added the minister, 'I wanted you to tell poor Mrs Anderson, if you'll be so kind, I've kept a special eye upon that spot. She will know what I mean; and all is safe, as safe as if her arms had been about the place.'

'Where her little Jeanie lies,' said Mrs Dysart, her eyes filling with tears. 'Oh, Mr Murray, you know what's in a mother's heart.'

'I have had one of my own,' he said with a glimmer in his eyes also.

How did Isabel know what all that meant? She never looked up, did not listen, but kept going over in her head the utterance of another voice: 'I'll be Sir William some day, and you my lady.' Very different—very much more interesting than this dreary talk of midnight watches and of graves—hot with life and ambition and excitement, things that make the blood flow fast in your veins—and yet— Her eyes were on her work all the time, and her needle flying as if for bare life: but she felt everything that was passing, and the conclusion to which her other lover was making up his mind. He, too, was acquiescing, putting her into the arms that had seized her so boldly, believing that she was ready to follow Willie Torrence as soon as he held up his finger. The girl felt as if she could have jumped up and cried aloud, and rejected that bold suit there and then.—To whom? To her mother and to the other, who was relinquishing his hopes so easily? Would they have known what she meant if she had cried out that 'No,' only 'No,' no more, which almost burst from her lips? They would have thought it nerves or temper, or perhaps an indignant throwing off of every blame from the other—the man she was supposed to love. When she rose to give her hand to the minister, and met his wistful regretful look, which seemed to question her very soul, her spirit rose in wild impatience, 'You should not find fault,' she cried hastily, 'with them that are not here to answer for themselves.'

'Isabel!' cried her mother in dismay.

'And I don't,' said the minister, with a slight quivering of his lip; 'I find no fault. I just hold by my side, as he holds to his. We must all do that, if we're to act like men.'

'Bairn, what are you thinking of?' said Mrs Dysart.—'She is just a great one for standing up for the absent,' she added, in an apologetic tone, as young Murray went away. But she, too, made up her mind that Isabel's choice was fixed, and that this great question was to be held in doubt no more. They both stood watching the minister go through the garden with his gun, involuntarily, almost unaware what they were doing in the preoccupation of their minds. Going away, Mrs Dysart thought, carrying with him all her hopes of seeing Isabel established near her, and in the care of a good man. Her heart was heavy with doubts and fears for what might be before her child. 'You will maybe be sorry some day,' she said with a sigh.

'Sorry—for what?' said Isabel: and then she threw her work aside and hastened to her room, to put on her blue pelisse and hurry out—where? for a walk—for a long walk, she said to Jenny in the kitchen.—It was such a fine day—at this season it was best to take advantage of every fine day—

Isabel did take a long walk, and as she came back, passed through Musselburgh, where there were more people than usual in the streets, and some apparent commotion which was no less unusual. She could not but hear some scraps of talk as she passed—something about a riot

in Edinburgh, and some one who would have to flee the country—of which she took no conscious notice. What did a riot in Edinburgh matter to her? If she had thought of it, she would have taken care not to pass by Uncle John's house on her way home: but her mind was so full of other things that she never remembered this danger, until she had been seen and hailed from the window, where there was generally a watch kept in the afternoon, lest Isabel should go by. She was very reluctant to be thus stopped, her mind being too full for talk, and for finding answers to all Aunt Mary's questions. And what was worse still, here again was Mr Murray, to whom she had betrayed herself so short a time before, and who met her with the same wistful, half-compassionate, half-reproachful look, as if—which was more ridiculous than all the rest—she was doing any injury to him. But to resist Aunt Mary's entreaty was impossible. 'I was just wanting somebody to send upon a message to your mother—and the minister was offering to take it up himself, though it's a mile or more out of his way.'

'That's nothing, nothing!' young Murray cried.

'You're very kind,' said Aunt Mary; 'but now that Easabell's here, she can take it herself. Your mother will be dreadfully shocked, my darlin', and so will you your own self. It's just awful news.'

'There's a new edition of the *Courant* with it all in: and nothing but a change in the ministry, or rebellion in the colonies, or the King's serious illness, would in an ordinary way justify that,' said Uncle John. He had the paper all crisp and new in his hands. 'I got it as a regular subscriber, sent out by an express; and by this time that bit slip of paper is worth its weight in gold. Your mother will like to see it. It's more satisfactory than hearing of a thing like that just by word of mouth.'

'What is it, Uncle John?'

'It's not said,' cried Aunt Mary, 'that anybody is blamed but just the Professor himself: the rioters were just keen after him: and his house has been mobbed and all his windows broken.'

'And they say he will have to flee the country,' the minister added in a solemn tone.

'I heard that in the town,' said Isabel, still indifferent, 'something about fleeing the country. But who is it? It cannot be these terrible villains, Burke and Hare.'

'My dear,' said Uncle John, 'it's worse in one way, though not in another. These fiends in human shape are safe in prison; and I'm hoping they'll go out from there only by the gallows. But to think of a Professor in Edinburgh College, and one of the first surgeons in the world, and an elder of the kirk, and a very respectable man—'

'Lord bless us!' cried Aunt Mary, 'it's enough to make a person mistrust the General Assembly itself.'

'I am in a hurry to get back,' said Isabel shortly. She knew in her inmost soul that Mr Murray would propose to 'see her home,' and this was more alarming to her than any news that could be in the papers—or so at least she thought.

There was a little trill of voices all beginning to speak at once; but Uncle John rose up in his large seafaring person from his chair and dominated them all, waving the paper in his hand. 'Where do you think,' he said impressively, 'the last of these poor victims was found?—Isabel! in a box, in a cellar, in one of the grand new Edinburgh houses, the house of Stokes, the great Professor.'

'Dr Stokes—that all the College folk were so proud of, and his name in all the papers!' cried Aunt Mary breathless.

Murray said no word; but he placed a chair carefully behind Isabel, as if she might faint or fall.

'Dr Stokes!' said Isabel, still unawakened. 'Yes, I know about him: he is the man that— But he is nothing to us. I'll tell my mother; but she will not be caring so very much.—You may keep your paper, Uncle John, and I must just run away home.'

'You don't understand, Isabel. If it was just him and no more! But there are others that cannot be forgotten when he's named. Oh, the shame to our College and all our grand doctors! But there's more still, more than that.'

'You see, they must all have known,' said Aunt Mary, 'not just one person alone.'

And the minister shook his head. 'Knowing all they know, I fear, I fear,' he said, 'they must have known.'

Isabel's head began to clear slowly: it had been confused with so many thoughts of her own, and had refused to take in any new thing: but now a sharp pang like a knife cut all the web of these thoughts and sent them flying away. 'Dr Stokes,' she repeated, faltering; 'I—begin to mind. He's the chief that—that they all speak about: he's a great man.'

'Great in one way, not, it appears, in another,' said Uncle John with solemnity. 'I would say nothing if it was only him that was in question; for, as you say, Isabel, my dear, he's nothing to us; but there's more, more to think of than only him.'

'It's that poor, poor woman down by Eskside that I'm thinking of most,' added Aunt Mary, shaking her head.

Isabel had by this time come fully to herself: it had flashed upon her like a wild blaze of fire, lighting up the whole landscape, what they meant: but she would not allow it to be seen how she was moved. 'I'll take my mother the paper,' she said, holding herself up with a sort of dignity, 'since you wish it, Uncle John: and tell her. I am sorry for Dr Stokes, if—anything happens to him, such a great man; but it's no—no—business of ours.—I must not stop another moment,' she cried hurriedly, 'for I was a little late last night, and the days are short, and it's soon dark.'

'If I might see you home, Miss Isabel!'

Aunt Mary frowned behind Isabel's back and shook her head. 'Let her be, let her be; this is no the moment,' she said.

Isabel herself took no notice of his petition; she hurried away, not even hearing him, preserving her composure with a great effort, but with a strange singing in her ears and beating in her heart. She seemed to have heard it all before—to have heard nothing else discussed—

yet to have listened without understanding: till suddenly it was brought home to her what it all meant. Oh, what would it have mattered to her how much or how little the doctors knew? What were the doctors to Isabel? or even Dr Stokes, though he was the greatest surgeon in Edinburgh, and people came from far and near to his classes. The doctors must have known—she had heard nothing but this for twenty-four hours past. But why should she care? The doctors! What were the doctors to her? She repeated this over to herself with a strange bravado, saying the words again and again, as if that would make them true. But her whole brain was on fire, and there was a tightening and oppression in her breast such as Isabel had never felt before.

As she set her face to the wind, it came blowing down keen upon her, bringing voices upon it in broken gusts, flinging words and indistinct phrases in her face, sometimes like the noise of a distant tumult: 'He'll have to flee the country: he's been mobbed, and his windows broken: he'll have to flee the country,' in a hurry and roar of many voices. And then one small note came in, her mother's voice, saying: 'There would be an Assistant or somebody,' and then another—oh, quite another! that said in the dark—'I'm going to London, with a grand opening—and to-morrow I'll come for my answer.' Then the clamour seemed to rise once more over all the dim landscape, the voice of the crowd: 'He'll have to flee the country, flee the country, flee the country!' What a wild, hurrying, dizzying tumult and confusion of sound!

This strong excitement yet confusion which drove her along took all her girlish fright away when she came again to the dark corner of the road. The heavy shadows of the old house had no terrors for her that night. It was not so late, indeed, as the evening before. The sky was clear and still full of light, though there had already risen into it one clear little inquisitive star, the very star that had shone into her window last night and reflected itself in the mirror on her wall. It seemed to have come out now to look after Isabel, to make sure what she was going to do. And she was not surprised, though her heart gave a jump, when something detached itself from the shadow and a figure came forward to meet her. There was no jest of pouncing upon her this time, none of the rough play which had been carried to such unwarrantable lengths the night before. Her hands and her feet grew cold and her head hot in her sense of the great crisis in her life that had suddenly arrived: but she went on to meet him silently, as if they were both figures in a dream. 'So it's you,' she said to him with a catch in her breath as they came together. 'Isabel! you've brought me my answer,' he said. And then they stood and looked at each other in the stillness of the twilight: and a confusion of all those strange echoes came once more over Isabel's brain. 'Will you have to flee the country?' she said slowly. It seemed the only thing there was to say.

'What do you mean—what do you mean? I am not going to flee the country,' he cried indignantly, though with no surprise in his tone. It seemed natural to him, too, that these were the only words she could say.

'And all the time,' said Isabel, 'all the time it was you: and you knew.'

'What are you talking about, Bell? Do you want to mystify me altogether? I'm come for my answer after what passed between us last night. Are you coming with me? That's the question before the house,' said Torrence with a forced laugh.

'They say he has been mobbed and his windows broken; and he's in danger of his life. Oh, Willie! are they after you too?'

'I think you are out of your senses,' he cried. 'Give me no nonsense, but an honest answer. There's great things before me yet: I'll make a lady of you, Bell; you shall have a finer house than any of them, and a carriage, and there's no telling what we'll come to. Just put your hand in mine.'

'What is the difference between fleeing the country and hurrying away to London, that you never thought of before?' she said. 'Oh, Willie Torrence! and your mother? and all of us that were so proud of you.'

'You may be as proud as you like,' he cried desperately; 'a man may make a mistake and be none the worse. I'll be Sir William before all's done. The London hospitals know a man when they see him, not like those asses in Edinburgh. I'm safe enough. Come Bell, give me your hand.'

'Oh,' cried Isabel sinking her voice, 'you were never cruel nor an ill man. Willie! will you say you did not know?'

'What has that to do with it?' he cried, dashing his clenched hand into the air. 'I came here to ask a question, not to answer one. Bell! just you mind what you're doing! You're letting your chance slip as well as mine.'

'I'm going home to my mother: and I've nothing more to say to you, Dr Torrence,' Isabel said.

LEFT-HANDED FOLK.

WHY anybody should be left-handed is one of those matters in which the question is easier put than answered. The reason why we are right-handed has been met by statements and theories more or less plausible. In the first place, it has been shown that the human body is not symmetrical. The right lung is larger than the left. The liver, during the inspiration of the lungs, swings to the right side, so that the centre of gravity of the body is brought nearly over the right foot. The weight of the viscera to the right of the medial line is nearly a pound and a half heavier than that to the left of it. All this, while it gives a mechanical advantage to the right arm in working, and to the right shoulder in raising a weight, shows us also why, passively, burdens are more easily carried on the left shoulder, for in that case we stoop forward so as to bring the centre of gravity through the stronger right limb. Again, it has been pointed out that the left hemisphere of the brain is larger and better supplied with blood-vessels than the right, and that it is the left hemisphere of the brain which, working crosswise, controls the muscles of the right arm and hand. Then there is the sword-and-shield theory, which considers the earliest

condition of man to have been militant. To soldiers, the vital organ, the heart, being on the left side, it was thought necessary to cover it with the shield and wield the sword in the right. True, against these is the wet-nurse theory, which supposes left-handedness to be favoured in youth by the fact of the infant being carried most frequently on the left arm, thus giving more scope to the early use of the child's left hand. Fashion, however, is always alert, and to this imperial mistress even our limbs must submit. Fashion incessantly demands that the right hand should have the preference.

So that, with all these weighty reasons why we should be right-handed, it is marvellous why left-handed people should be found at all. Yet such are by no means uncommon. The teacher of an elementary school who watched the proportion for many years, gave it as his experience, that, in the rural district in which his school was situated, more than five per cent. of the children were left-handed. In these cases the tendency could be shown to be hereditary; and the left hand, even to the size of the thumb-nails, showed itself larger than the right. It was painful to see the attempts made by the left-handed pupils to write and cipher normally; and, after the right hand had been forced into service, the result was a compromise, the writer generally developing a handwriting inclined neither to right nor left. In the making of figures, both the 3 and the 6 were for a time reversed, and 8 in some cases formed by drawing the straight line down and curving the other from below. In the mechanical trades, the carpenter's bench, his gimlets, screws, and many of his planes are made to suit the right hand, so that a left-handed apprentice is handicapped, and must either fight against Nature or obtain tools fitted for the left hand. An elaborate print-cutter's gauge for measuring off different sizes of copper required to be driven into the pattern, if made for a left-handed man is of little value when exposed for sale.

But we do not need to go far for illustrations of how inconvenient a world this is for the left-handed. Purchase a scarf, and the left-handed owner finds the slit, through which the part requires to be pushed to catch the pin, on the wrong side for him. Let him sit down to dinner, and the waiter brings the dishes from which he selects a part to the wrong shoulder. Let him lift a moustache cup, and he perceives his peculiarity has not been taken into account. Let him attempt to mow, and he fain would reverse the shape of the scythe. Let him learn drill or dancing, or endeavour to work in harmonious combination, and his awkwardness is for ever brought home to him.

And yet, on the other side, the despised left hand makes good its claims in many cases to be the defter of the two. The fingers that touch and adjust with such nicety the strings of the violin are surely as cunning as those that move the bow. The hand that guides the reins and steers with exactness the horse through the crowded streets is quite as cunning as, one might say much more than, the hand that wields the whip. But great is fashion, unanswerable is theory. It would appear that as life becomes more and more complex, we are becoming more

and more specialised, and the difference between our limbs is encouraged, rather than hindered, by every pair of scissors turned off at Sheffield, by every screw made in Birmingham, and by every slap administered to the young offending fingers that would dare to shake hands incorrectly.

It is curious to notice the vagaries of humanity in cases where no hard and fast line has been already drawn. Although most right-handed persons put on their coats left arm first, a considerable percentage thrust in the right first. Soldiers fire from the right shoulder, but sportsmen are found who prefer the left. In working with the spade, a proportion of right-handed men grasp the spade with the left and push with left foot and right hand; though, when using an axe, the same individuals would grasp farthest down with the right. The Persians mount their horses from the right side, which is the different side from that mounted by Europeans.

The buttons on coats, &c., are placed on the right side, and the shed of the hair in boys to the left, evidently to suit manipulation by the right hand. The great philosopher Newton records that at first he confined his astronomical observations to his right eye, but afterwards he managed to train his left. But there are persons who could not do this owing to the unequal strength of their eyes. Strange to say the Chinese assign the place of honour to the left. At Kunyenyé, in Africa, Cameron relates being introduced to the heir-presumptive to the throne, the nails of whose left hand had been allowed to grow to an enormous length as a sign of high rank, proving that he was never required to perform manual labour, and also providing him with the means of tearing the meat which formed his usual diet.

The falcon in Europe is carried on the left wrist, but in Asia on the right. The Latin races hold omens to be favourable when towards the right; but the Teutonic races, including our own, when towards the left. The Saxon races, as masters of the sea and pioneers in the laying of railways, have imposed their own rules of the left side on the French and other Latin races, who, however, still in driving and riding keep to the rule of the road derived from their progenitors. The hands of clocks and watches travel from east to west like the sun, or as we draw a spiral from the interior outwards; and we hand around our playing-cards and our hospitable bottle after the same fashion, which like fashion we adhere to in turning a horse, so that the violation of it, or the turning *widdershins*—that is, against the sun—is considered unlucky. It is a curious circumstance how few people ever clasp hands otherwise than having the right thumb outwards, or coil thread save one way.

With regard to symmetry, Nature, when she has a purpose to serve, is nowise loth to depart from it. Indeed, there is hardly a symmetrical human face to be found. The right eye and ear are generally placed higher, and the left leg is frequently the longer. Quadrupeds and very young children are more symmetrical; but the hermit-crab has the claw protruding from the shell the longer; the cachelot or sperm whale has the eye on the one side larger than the other. Parrots rather favour the right claw; and the

African elephant—as Sir S. Baker assured the writer—works most with the right tusk, called on this account by the Arabs ‘the servant.’ Aristotle declares that motion begins from the right. ‘Wherefore the burden should rest on the part moved, and not on the part moving, otherwise motion is more difficult.’ He also looks on the spiral curves of shells as suggesting a right-handed designer. Another ancient philosopher assures us that our dreams are less egotistical and selfish when we are sleeping on our right side than on our left.

Curiosity was naturally highly strung when discoveries were made of exceedingly ancient engravings and sculptures fashioned by cave-men at an era further removed from the earliest Egyptian records than ours is from those. We have the authority of Sir Daniel Wilson that the earliest records of the human race show a preference for the right hand, although not so completely as that shown in modern times. In the scarcely so remote Bronze Age, the preference still holds good. One has only to look over Egyptian, Etruscan, Assyrian, Greek, or Roman pictures, engravings, or sculptures, to see that man was right-handed as he is now, and that he carried his burdens then, as now, mainly on the left shoulder, while his dress and decoration follow in the same lines as the soldier still wears his sword or the shepherd his plaid. At the same time shoes made especially for each foot, and gloves designed for each hand, have more of a modern aspect. The sandals of ancient times are extremely much alike. Among the humble classes in Scotland sixty years ago shoes for young people not made for right and left were preferred.

It is pleasant to be able to record that notwithstanding the sinister ridicule of ancient and modern language and literature, and the antagonist pen and ink demonstrations of doctors, there are and have been many eminent left-handed individuals both professional and gymnastic. A list of these has been preserved to us through the labours of Sir Daniel Wilson, and Charles Reade, the novelist.

THE SHAWMUT TRESTLE.

CHAPTER II.—CONCLUSION.

By the employees of the Chicago and North Pacific, Lloyd Freeman soon came to be looked upon as a good deal of a martinet. Perhaps he was. But then Lloyd Freeman had gained his training and first experience as an official in England, where, as every one knows, the discipline on the railways is well-nigh perfect. He had topped off his experience by two years in India, where the methods of managing railroads are semi-military, and where all but a very few of the employees are as afraid of an official as a rabbit is of a poacher.

In the great West of America, Freeman found he had a very different lot of men to handle. They were not well-disciplined Englishmen, nor were they scared Hindus. They were free and independent citizens of the almighty United States, and they were ‘just as good as the next man, and a little better, you bet!’ They were

intelligent enough, goodness knows. Freeman thought a large number of them knew a little too much for their own good, for the benefit of the railroad, and for his peace of mind. What these ‘birds-o'-freedom’ objected to most was to be ‘called down’ by Freeman for going on duty untidily attired or a minute or two late. The locomotive firemen especially rebelled because Freeman insisted upon their having the bright parts of their engines at all times in ‘dress-parade’ condition. The crisis came when the general manager issued an order in which he announced that he would hold the engine-drivers personally responsible for the proper attention of their respective firemen in the matter of keeping the engines bright and clean.

Mutterings of complaint became general all along the line, and when two or three of the engine-men had ‘walked the carpet’ (that is, had stood upon the general manager’s office carpet while that gentleman warned and admonished them) rebellious language became loud and frequent. Still, the men had a modicum of good sense, and the older ones admitted to themselves that Freeman’s requirements were reasonable. They were receiving excellent wages, the best paid in the country, and they were well aware that the business of the railroad was not yet remunerative. Both old and young could plainly see that the general manager was as firm as a rock, and they well knew that he had the support of the New York financiers.

‘Yer see, boys,’ said Hank Larrabee, a grizzled old Western railroader, ‘the old man’s got sand, if he is a derved Britisher, an’ don’t yer ferget it! He’s a stayer from ‘way-back, an’ if they’s any pushin’ ter be done, yer kin bet yer last pair o’ socks Freeman’ll do the pushin’! My -ways ain’t the old man’s ways, but, mark my words, we might as well come ter Freeman’s time first as last.’

Which last remark of Mr Larrabee’s was as true as gospel, and the chances are that the men would have taken the old engine-driver’s advice, if an unlooked-for disturber of the peace had not arrived upon the scene.

It was in the cold weather, a little before Christmas, and Lloyd Freeman was in the bustling Pacific coast town of Portland, Oregon. His business was over for the day, and he was strolling along the brilliantly lighted streets of the town, gazing in the gay windows of the stores, if haply he might find some little knick-knacks which might serve as Christmas gifts for the officials who had so far loyally supported him in his onerous duties.

Freeman was looking in a jeweller’s store window, when he became aware that another person was doing likewise. Once or twice this other person brushed quite closely against Freeman, but our friend supposed the movement accidental, and did not take his eyes from the window. When at last, however, the stranger shoved Freeman so violently that he had to take a step to prevent a tumble through the window, the general manager turned quickly round with an exclamation of surprise.

‘Ah! Don’t quite relish the idea of being crowded, do you?’ asked the man, who was just a little too massive in his build and too coarse-featured to be handsome.

'As there is ample room for both of us, sir,' replied Freeman haughtily, 'I shall be obliged if you will not stand quite so close to me.'

As he spoke, Freeman closely scrutinised the man, whose appearance was just a trifle familiar, yet who was so well wrapped in a rich heavy coat well-trimmed with fur, that he might have been either friend or enemy in disguise.

'Trying to place me, ain't you?' asked the fellow, with a leer, divining Freeman's thoughts. 'Well, I'll assist you. You didn't like being jostled a little bit, did you, Mr Lloyd Freeman? No. But four years ago you crowded a poor wretch to the wall when he was trying to make a fresh start, just because he felt good over a sup of liquor. Do you mind, Mr Lloyd Freeman?'

'Bibb? Michael Bibb?' exclaimed the manager with some surprise. He recognised the man now, though he had last seen him in the West Australian bush.

'No, not Michael Bibb, either! This is a free country, thank Heaven! A man is at liberty to change his name if he sees fit. Michael Bibb expired in Australia; and the man who landed in San Francisco with a few thousands of the yellow in his grip-sack is Mr Demuth—mind that. And bear this in mind also: Robert Demuth, Esquire, don't have to carry a darned ticket-of-leave—do you understand?'

Quietly, to avoid a scene upon the street, Freeman had led the way to a darker side-street.

'Now, look here, Mr Demuth,' said he, humouring the fellow in the matter of his name. 'You go your way, and I'll go mine. I bear you no ill-will; and if you will not annoy me, I pledge you my honour that not a word will I breathe to do you hurt. Why prolong this conversation? Good-night.'

'No, that won't do,' said Demuth, *né* Bibb. 'I'm going to say my say. You don't want to hurt me, eh? Great Heaven! You hurt me enough, didn't you?'

'Why go over that old ground, man? I gave you every chance over yonder. I knew very well when I employed you that you had escaped from Freemantle. Yet I gave you a good job, and trusted you, until you took to whisky and began to raise Cain by disaffecting the other workmen. Even then I tried to reason with you; but when you went too far, and imperilled the company's property and the lives of the passengers, I had no option but to turn you over to the police. Now, man, leave the past alone. If you have made a fresh start and are doing well, I am glad of it. Don't try to see me, for it only excites you. You are excited now.'

'Excited? Yes, by thunder! And you'll be excited, Mr Lloyd Freeman, before I get through with you. I'm rich now, I tell you, and in shape to pay off old scores. I'll take you at your word and keep out of your path—but you'll hear from me, darn you! You'll hear from me.'

For the rest of that evening Freeman was somewhat upset; but when, three days later, he returned to Medicine Hat, the general manager had almost forgotten his encounter with Michael Bibb in the streets of Portland.

Yet, when, on New Year's Eve, the startling news that nearly every engineer and fireman, as

well as several of the other employees, had struck work, reached the ears of Lloyd Freeman, the chief executive of the Chicago and North Pacific could not help connecting the unfortunate occurrence with the ex-Australian convict.

By much effort, and chiefly by the promise to arrange and adhere to a fast-time schedule, Freeman had secured a year's contract with the Government to transport the United States mails between Chicago and the cities of Oregon. The contract took effect on the first day of January, when a mail-train must leave Chicago, and another, bound East, must leave Portland. Early in the morning of the third day both trains would be due to pass each other at Medicine Hat. On the night of December the 31st the officials did not know where to lay their hands on more than half-a-dozen loyal engine crews. It would require at least twenty to work the mail-service alone.

Behind closed doors, Lloyd Freeman held a consultation with his subordinate chiefs, while the confidential telegraph operator kept the wires warm sending and taking messages to and from the division superintendents.

'Gentlemen,' said Freeman—and he was the coolest man in the room—'we must run the mail-trains. Not only do we forfeit the year's contract by failing in one day's service, but the prestige and honour of this railroad are at stake. I must take time to think over future methods and of the attitude which we will permanently take towards the strikers. For the present our entire energies must be devoted to the mails. I find we can count upon seven loyal engine crews. The four superintendents have volunteered to man engines and to find firemen to help them. Our Locomotive Superintendent, Mr Scott, says he will take the East-bound train out of this station. I ask none of my colleagues to go where I will not go myself. I will take the West-bound run from Medicine Hat. The strikers dare not interfere with the mail-trains, for the whole power and force of the United States Government will guarantee their safe running. The telegraph operators and station agents are loyal. We will all do our best, and we *must* succeed!'

At four o'clock in the morning of January the 3d, two monster locomotives, attached to each of which were three huge mail-cars, puffed and snorted into the depot at Medicine Hat. Notwithstanding the unfortunate strike, each of these trains had successfully travelled over twelve hundred miles of rough track through some of the dirtiest weather in winter. But they were right 'on time,' and Lloyd Freeman felt elated as he knew that one-half of this most difficult task was accomplished.

The two trusty engines, coated thickly with frozen snow, rain, and mud, were quickly detached from the trains of mail-cars, and fresh hissing and throbbing monsters took their places. Freeman stood on the platform and wished Locomotive Superintendent Scott 'good luck' as that official pulled out with the East-bound train; then he himself mounted the engine headed for the West, where Medway Parker, who was to act as fireman, had already taken his place.

Lloyd Freeman was no greenhorn at the lever and throttle. He was a finished expert; and a

master-hand controlled that magnificent piece of mechanism, as the hundred-ton engine slowly steamed out through the intricate maze of tracks which form the 'yard' at Medicine Hat.

The general manager had gathered some varied and curious experience in his lifetime, but this was the toughest job he had ever tackled. The morning was dark as pitch, although it was after four A.M. when they started out, and it would be dark until seven. It had rained all the previous day, but toward midnight snow and frost had taken the place of rain. Now the weather appeared to be moderating slightly, and rain and sleet, aided by a driving wind, assisted the intense darkness in making it a night to be remembered.

Freeman and Parker were to take the train two hundred and twenty miles, and a stop must be made about half-way for water. They were able to run swiftly and somewhat recklessly, owing to the fact that the strike prevented other trains from being in the way; like all Western roads, the C. & N. P. consisted of a single track only.

For more than two hours the men exchanged scarcely a word; they needed all their breath to face the weather, from which the engine-cab only partially sheltered them. As for Parker, he was busy enough shovelling coal into the furnace.

About half-past six Parker leaned upon his shovel, consulted his watch, leaned his head out of the cab, and then put his mouth to Freeman's ear.

'Don't forget to slow up for Shawmut Trestle,' he said. 'I calculate we'll strike it inside of ten minutes. It's two miles long, and such devil's weather as this makes it a ticklish place to cross at high speed.'

Freeman nodded his head. He knew Shawmut Trestle to be a lofty wooden viaduct, built over a deep gulch. Turning to Parker, he said: 'What are your standing orders to engine-drivers?'

'Ten miles an hour over the trestle,' was the reply.

Again Freeman nodded his head.

'I'll not forget,' he said.

Lloyd Freeman grasped the lever tightly with his left hand, threw back the glass slide in the side of the cab, pulled his fur cap down over his ears, and thrust his head out into the night, which was just commencing to disappear.

About three minutes later Parker was nearly thrown from his feet as Freeman pushed the lever over with a jerk and shouted, 'Brakes!'

Quick as lightning, Parker put down the Westinghouse brake, which acted upon the entire train, and then both men, one on each side of the engine, leaned out as far as they could reach.

What they saw (and it all happened in a moment or two) was a hand-car approaching along the track, a hundred or two of yards ahead of them, upon which stood a man working the car with one hand, and frantically waving a red lantern with the other.

On rushed the engine (slowing up, oh, so slowly!), every quarter-second bearing down more closely upon the man on the hand-car, who seemed utterly oblivious to his possible fate.

Freeman sounded the whistle, once—twice—thrice; and then both men on the engine yelled like maniacs.

But even in that brief time and space the man

on the hand-car was saved from being crushed to death by the giant locomotive.

Saved? Yes, by a bullet; for Medway Parker's quick eye saw, from his side of the track, a shot fired; and Lloyd Freeman noted the sudden fall of the tall figure on the hand-car. But Medway Parker was not only quick with his eye; he was an old frontiersman, and his pistol hand was (as his enemies had often remarked) like greased lightning. He took in the whole situation in an instant. The man on the hand-car was killed for warning them of some unseen danger. From Parker's revolver sped a bullet which dealt summary and irrevocable vengeance.

When the train was brought to a standstill, the cow-catcher of the engine touching the little four-wheeled trolley, Lloyd Freeman and Medway Parker gently lifted from the hand-car a dead Indian. It was Young-man-proud-of-his-horses, otherwise 'poor old Slops.'

And by the side of the faithful red-skin they laid the corpse of Mr Demuth, known in the convict settlement of Freemantle, Western Australia, as K. 644, formerly Michael Bibb.

That morning the North Pacific Mail was delayed two hours, while Parker, with some Indian help, relaid seven or eight rails that had been removed from the Shawmut Trestle.

GERMAN FOLKLORE.

It is fitting to begin the roll-call of superstitions with one connected with the first of the year. The dreams of New-year's Night, Hausfrau will tell you, invariably come true. A similar property is accorded to the first night's dream in a strange house; this, it is said, is sure to come true, no matter how preposterous and improbable it may appear to be. If the child in the cradle laughs in its sleep, the mother's heart is gladdened by the thought that angels are whispering to it. If a tempest is brewing, she shudders, and prays for the poor distracted soul that has just died by its own hand. If a star falls, she sighs for those who loved the dead man or woman; and when scientists rejoice over the discovery of a new star, she only has tears for the bereaved mother whose lost child the star represents. She checks the heedless girl who would rock the cradle empty, ignorant that thereby she rocks the baby's rest away. She watches heedfully lest the tears of the mourners should fall on the dead man in the coffin and make him restless in the grave; and she chides the children who would eat off one plate, careless that by so doing they will become enemies for life.

When the sky darkens, she is wise enough to know a babe has been born that will be a scourge to itself and its neighbours; and she is heedful not to point upwards, lest she should destroy the rainbow, or lay knives edge uppermost on the table—for they would cut the angels' feet—or neglect to knock at the wine-casks when there is a death in the house, for such neglect would turn the good wine sour. She shuns the neighbour who spins on Saturday night, for she will walk after her death; and the neighbours

who sew on Sunday and on Good-Friday, for they will be struck by lightning. She matters the Paternoster when she watches a shooting-star; crushes empty egg-shells lest witches should get into them; and refrains from looking in the mirror at night lest the Prince of Darkness should glance over her shoulder.

If she is born on a Sunday she can see ghosts, and is quite untroubled by the gift. She is learned in weather-lore, and knows that rain on St John's Day will spoil the nuts; that cold April gives bread and wine; that the moon's change on a Friday betokens storm; and that wheat sown on St Maurice's Day will be blighted. If she is curious to know what will happen during the year, she creeps into the winter corn on Christmas Eve and hears the future revealed.

If she has many troubles, she wears a girdle of mugwort on St John's Eve, and afterwards flings it into the fire, trusting that as it burns her griefs will wane and disappear. When the wind blows the long grass about, she calls the children about her, lest they should stray away and come upon the corn-wolf, whose stealthy passage makes the grass sway thus. She forbids them to pull the roses, which are under the protection of Laurin, king of the dwarfs; or to sleep under an elder-bush, or even to pluck its white flowers, lest they should offend the petulant Elder Mother. On winter nights, while she spins, she tells her lads and lasses of Holda, who sails her silver boat across the dark skies by night; and of the moss-women whom the Wild Huntsman pursues during storms; and of certain flowers which once were men and women: how the plantain was a girl deserted by her lover, who used to wait by the wayside for him: how the maple was a village beauty who loved a soldier not wisely but too well, and was cursed by her mother: how the camomile flowers were turbulent and rapacious soldiers, changed after death into this shape for their sins: how dead babies ascend to heaven crowned with strawberry flowers: and how crumbs of rye-bread placed on the saddle of a tired horse will remove his fatigue.

That a red mouse is an emblem of the soul, every German knows; and my typical woman is not likely to ignore, any more than she is to forget the story of the old woman who became a woodpecker, or the way to ensure plenty of chickens; that is, to set the hen to hatch when the worshippers are leaving church. She knows that every slain swallow makes a mouth of heavy rain; that sparrows' nests on the roof bring riches, and a stork's, long life; and that lightning strikes where the redstart builds; as well as she knows that oaks are the chosen homes of fairies; that demons dwell in old cherry-trees; that the 'undines' hide from mortal eyes in the cups of water-lilies; and that flax and its spinners are under the peculiar care of the goddess Holda.

If a hare crosses her path, she turns back, fearing some bad luck. If she witnesses a wedding in the rain, she congratulates the happy couple on coming riches. She welcomes the song of a cricket as a sign of good luck; and leaves her child unchristened as long as she can, that it may have large eyes, for as long as a pair of scissors or a knife is in its cradle, it is safe from the witches. At the christening she selects, if

possible, godparents from three different parishes, that the child may live to be a hundred, and refrains from giving it her name or her husband's lest it should die before them, and checks the flighty young gossips from looking about them in church, for fear the infant should have the unenviable faculty of seeing ghosts. On May-day Eve (Walpurgis Nacht) she draws crosses on her door, that witches may not enter; and persuades her husband to fire his gun over their cornfields before retiring, so that no evil thing may harm the wheat. Thus lives she amid a store of harmless superstitions and dainty fancies.

IN THE GLOAMIN'.

WHY sinks the sun sae slowly doun
Behind the Hill o' Fare?
What restless cantrip's ta'en the moon?
She's up an hour an' mair.
I doubt they're in a plot the twa
To cheat me o' the Gloamin';
Yestreen they've seen me slip awa',
An' ken where I gang roamin'.

The trees bent low their list'ning heads
Around the Loch o' Skene;
The soft wind whispered mang the reeds
As we gaed by yestreen.
The Bee, brushed frae the heather bell,
Hummed loudly at our roamin',
Syn'e hurried hame in haste to tell
The way we spent the gloamin'.

The Mavis told his mate to hush
An' hearken frae the tree;
The Robin keekit frae a bush
An' thought we didna see.
But now they sing o' what they saw
Whenever we gang roamin';
They pipe the very words an' a'
We whispered in the gloamin'.

The wintry winds may stir the trees,
Clouds hide baith sun an' moon,
An' early fro't the Loch may freeze,
An' still the birdies' tune.
The bee a harried bike may mourn,
An' mirk o'ertak the gloamin',
But aye to thee my thoughts will turn
Wherever I gang roamin'.

CHARLES MURRAY.

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Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, Limited,
47 Paternoster Row, LONDON; and EDINBURGH.